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A Letter to the Democracy.

"Nor am I bound by any laws of my country."

THE policy of Mr. Lincoln and his administration can bear no other interpretation than this. What right or privilege is there, which American freemen hold dear that has not been infringed? Indeed unless the military leaders have pledged themselves to sustain Mr. Lincoln and his administration, in carrying out the Chicago Platform at the point of the bayonet, I am annoyed at their reckless disregard of the retributions of the future. Fellow-citizens I beg leave to call your attention to the case of Edward Deering, I do it to show that the administration has to go back hundreds of years to find a precedent parallel to the arrest of our Police Commissioners. "*In every step and feature it was a lawless use of might*, Edward Deering had a right to think, God gave it to him." It was his inalienable property. It was his manhood. Nor prelate nor Queen could take it away: nor had prelate nor Queen a right to touch it. They did. They sinned against him, against his Maker. He had bridled his tongue within the statute. The commissioners could not even trump up an accusation against him. The bishop of London himself had confessed this; and in presence both of the Queen's attorney, and her solicitor, others had been called on to uncover their thoughts but it was when on arraignment for some act of non conformity; but this man was arraigned and scourged, *for his opinion only—his unpublished opinions, his suspected opinions, "for his opinions lest he should speak them."*—Extract from Queen Elizabeth and the Puritans by Hopkins.

The case of our Police Commissioners is precisely similar, the authority which arrested them *contrary to law and justice*, charges that they are "*arrested for some concealed purpose not known to the Lincoln administration.*" The Mayor of the city of

Baltimore, our Board of Police, and a part of the Legislature of the State of Maryland, arrested and held prisoners of state for thinking ! Precisely as in the case of Mr. Deering during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. The administration cannot trump up an accusation against these noble sons of Maryland in the shape of an overt-act ; but makes the acknowledgment that "they are dangerous men," what was called suspected men during the French revolution. Well may these noble men make the Robespierres of our day tremble. *American freemen arrested and held prisoners of state for thinking!!!*

This is an unconstitutional, and unwarrantable use of power, and in violation of the Constitution of the State of Maryland, which declares Art. 17th, "That every freeman for any injury done him in his person or property, ought to have remedy, by course of the law of the land, and ought to have justice and right, the freely without sale, fully without any denial, and speedily without delay according to the law of the land." And in violation of the Con. of the *late* United States as you will perceive by amendments to the Con., Art. 6th, " In all criminal persecutions the accused shall enjoy, the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the State and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation ; to be confronted with the witnesses against him ; and to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor ; and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense." Fellow-citizens, you have only to read the Constitution of the late United States, and of this State, in order to be convinced that the arrest of a part of our Legislature, and of our Police Commissioners, and of many others of our fellow citizens by Lincoln's lettres de cachet is one of the most flagrant outrages upon the inalienable rights of man ever perpetrated by lawless despotism. Truly we have lived to see a very remarkable period in the history of our country. Gentlemen of unimpeachable integrity, peaceable law-abiding citizens suffering the penalty of a *præmunire* for thinking ! Nor is this all, tender and delicate women have been dragged from their homes and hurried off to prison for ministering to the wants of the

sick and wounded. These are fearful times! We are fast drifting towards the state of affairs described by Madame De Staél. "We know not how to contemplate the 14 months which followed the proscription of the Gironde on the 30th of May, 1793." We seem as if we were descending, like Dante from circle to circle always lower in hell. To the animosity against the nobles and the priests, succeeded a feeling of irritation against the Landholders, next against talents, then even against personal beauty; finally against whatever was to be found of great or generous in human nature. "What is needed to prevent a fuller realization of the reign of terror" is immediate and concerted action on the part of the Democracy of the country. You have a right to demand that the Constitution shall be the supreme law of the land. If you have any desire to perpetuate the blessings of civil and religious liberty you will at once *demand* that this wicked fratricidal war shall cease. It would be far better to acknowledge the independence of the Confederate States, than to incur the guilt of murder. On the part of Southern people who are defending their homes from invasion, the killing of the invaders is justifiable homicide, but in view of the fact that the states have not delegated the power to coerce a sister state, in view of the fact that you are invading the soil of sovereign states, without the shadow of a legal or Constitutional right to do so, in view of these facts you ought to be fully convinced that the killing of Southern people by the Northern invaders is wilful deliberate murder, with malice aforethought. Nor will we be commanded or persuaded to pray for the success of our murderers, for we cannot urge in their behalf the plea of our blessed Saviour, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

M. H. W.

BALTIMORE, August 10, 1861.



